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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CJAN](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SCHLICHER MEETS GOC JUSTICE MINISTER
AND SIGNS MLAT AND EXTRADITION TREATY INSTRUMENTS.

Classified By: Consular Chief Henry Hand - reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On January 20, Ambassador Schlicher and Justice Minister Doros Theodorou signed the instruments amending the U.S.-Cyprus Mutual Legal Assistance (MLAT) and Extradition Treaties, bringing them into conformity with the agreements between the United States and the EU. In their meeting before the signing ceremony, the Ambassador raised U.S. concerns about the GOC's slow pace in implementing the National Plan on Trafficking in Persons (TIP). Theodorou sought to minimize the size of the TIP problem on Cyprus and praised U.S.-GOC cooperation on security issues. The Minister complained about the difficulties of controlling illegal immigration across the buffer zone from the Turkish Cypriot administered north. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Before the signing of the instruments amending the MLAT and Extradition Treaties, Ambassador Schlicher and Justice Minister Theodorou discussed the issues of Trafficking in Persons (TIP), illegal immigration and cooperation on security issues. The Ambassador stressed U.S. concern about the government's slow pace in implementing the commitments in the National Action Plan on TIP that the Council of Ministers had adopted last May. Theodorou was clearly uninterested in discussing TIP in detail and stressed that the National Action Plan assigned primary responsibility for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts to the Ministry of Interior rather than Justice. Theodorou insisted, however, that overall GOC efforts to curb the trafficking of women from Eastern Europe to Cyprus were going well. The ROC was no longer a transit point for women working in nightclubs and cabarets. 70 percent of the women who came to Cyprus as "artistes" returned to their countries at the end of their contracts. Of the remaining 30 percent, fewer than three percent moved on to work in clubs elsewhere in the region

¶3. (C) Theodorou trumpeted his success in lowering crime by 6%, improving prison conditions and strengthening the public image of the police force. He praised US-GoC cooperation on security issues and said his Ministry had a policy of holding credible information for no longer than 24 hours before passing it on. The Ambassador underscored our willingness to facilitate information exchange between GOC and Turkish Cypriot authorities in areas of mutual interest, particularly with respect to security concerns.

¶4. (C) Theodorou complained about what he described as a rising flow of illegal migrants entering the Government-controlled areas through the north. According to Theodorou's information, only 7 illegal immigrants had entered Cyprus through GOC-controlled ports of entry in 2004 while 5,280 had done so via the area administered by the Turkish Cypriots. The 2005 figures were, he claimed, 16 and 5,175, respectively. Theodorou observed that these numbers would only grow worse as Cyprus approached the anticipated Schengen Accession in 2008. He noted that seven EU nations

participated in a 2004 maritime surveillance exercise off the GOC controlled coastline that did not detect a single vessel engaged in human smuggling. He asked for the Ambassador's assistance in persuading Turkey to support a similar exercise off the coast of north Cyprus, adding that a proposal had already been made in the EU.

15. (C) Comment: The Justice Minister's statistics regarding migrant smuggling count only illegal migrants who arrived directly in the GOC controlled area by sea and entered without inspection. The much larger figure of people who enter via the Turkish Cypriot administered area appears to include people who arrived "legally" in the north, with or without a visa, as well as people who rowed ashore in the middle of the night. No reliable statistics are available, but if we include the number of illegal migrants who legally entered the ROC through ports and airports in the south on legitimate visas and subsequently overstayed or abused their visa status, the discrepancy between the numbers would be much, much less.
SCHLICHER